

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

their strength, since it had no single nerve center on which the Bolsheviks could lay their hands.

Unless, however, the British government resolved upon sending troops in greater numbers to Central Asia, which action was in turn linked with the general policy of intervention in Russia, the Malleon-Ashkhabad contingents stood little chance of making headway or even of maintaining themselves in the conquered positions. The British in 1918 really had two objectives in mind when they decided to intervene in Turkestan: one was the immediate objective of preventing Turkestan and its raw materials from becoming the prey of the Central Powers; the other—a long-range one—was to protect India against any anti-British penetration, whether German or Communist. The first objective was fulfilled when insurrection in various parts of Turkestan paralyzed the German and Bolshevik efforts to make immediate use of this rich area for economic or strategic purposes. And this chapter may be considered as closed at the moment of Germany's surrender to the Allies in November of 1918. Any continuation of intervention after that date bore clearly an anti-Bolshevik character.

Therefore it was necessary for the British government to decide at what line of strategic belt of defense for India should be established. Should it be Afghanistan, Iran, and "preventive" British influence in Chinese Turkestan? Or should the vast expanses of Russian Central Asia be included in it? Circumstances favored the most daring plans, because of the tactless or even ruthless Bolshevik policy toward the native populations of that region. Such organizations and movements as Alash Orda, the Kokand Turkestan

government, the
Teke-Turkoman forces, or the Basmatchi bands bore
eloquent testi-
mony that the local peoples, irrespective of their
nationality, were
opposed to the Communist rule. "With more vigour
and thorough-
ness than ever characterized the Czarist regime the
Bolsheviks have
carried on a policy of complete Russification," wrote
Colonel Ether-
ton.

The railways, public services and all that pertains to the
execution, are
entirely run by the Russians, whilst large numbers of
peasants have been
imported and settled on land forcibly taken from the
Kirghiz. The result
has been to create a feeling of bitter hostility and racial
hatred quite un-